

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01

SAM-01 ACDA-05 /087 W

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O 271831Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7862

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL TANGIER

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 1155

ALGIERS FOR ASST SECY ATHERTON

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SS AG UR

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SUBJECT: PRIMIN'S MOSCOW TALKS INCONCLUSIVE

REF: (A) RABAT 1011, (B) MOSCOW 2906

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER OSMAN RETURNED TO RABAT EVENING FEB 23. INFO ON SUBSTANCE HIS MOSCOW TALKS SKETCHY THUS FAR AND TO SOME EXTENT CONTRADICTORY, BUT IT APPEARS THAT LITTLE NEW GROUND WAS BROKEN. GENERAL FEELING, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO BE THAT NO HARM WAS DONE EITHER AND BOTH SIDES PUTTING MOST POSITIVE FACE POSSIBLE ON NON-RESULTS OF VISIT. AS TENSIONS CONTINUE, HOWEVER, MOROCCANS TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT IN EVENT OF FIGHT USSR WOULD BACK ALGERIA. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY MAP JUDGED PRIMIN'S MOSCOW STOP A "SUCCESS" BECAUSE IT PERMITTED "EXAMINATION OF STATE OF RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND GAVE "NEW IMPETUS" TO COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO WHICH "WILL BE REFLECTED IN THEIR FUTURE RECIPROCAL RELATIONS". MAP STORY CITED THREE ELEMENTS WHICH PERMITTED POLITICAL OBSERVERS TO BELIEVE THAT "NEW ERA" HAD BEGUN. FIRST WAS KOSYGIN INVITATION TO OSMAN FOR STOPOVER. SECOND WAS "WARM AND VERY CORDIAL WELCOME" GIVEN PRIMIN BY SOVIET LEADERS. THIRD ELEMENT CITED WAS RENEWAL OF OSMAN INVITATION FOR FUTURE OFFICIAL VISIT TO SOVIET UNION.

3. THERE SOMEWHAT CONFUSING STORIES CIRCULATING HERE ON SOME DETAILS OF VISIT. SOVIET EMBASSY SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT MOROCCANS INITIATED REQUEST FOR STOPOVER. SOVIET SAID BOTH SIDES RESTATED THEIR WELL-KNOWN POSITIONS, WITH SOVIETS STRESSING THEIR "BASIC" TIES WITH SISTER SOCIALIST STATE ALGERIA. MOROCCAN EMBOFF MOSCOW COMMENTS (REFTEL B) NOTWITHSTANDING, SEVERAL KNOWLEDGEABLE MOROCCAN SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT MESKALA WAS NOT DISCUSSED.

4. SECSTATE FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE MOHAMED BELKHAYAT, WHO ACCOMPANIED PRIMIN TO MOSCOW, INFORMED AMBASSADOR FEB 26 THAT NO ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS AT ALL HAD TAKEN PLACE IN MOSCOW, FOCUS HAVING BEEN ON SAHARA. BELKHAYAT SAID SOVIET THRUST SEEMED DESIGNED TO HELP SAVE BOUMEDIENE, WHO IN DIFFICULTY IN MOROCCAN ASSESSMENT. RUSSIANS ATTEMPTED TO INDUCE MOROCCO TO GO ALONG WITH SOME FORM OF REFERENDUM. BELKHAYAT HEDGED WHEN ASKED WHO REALLY TOOK
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INITIATIVE TO MAKE STOP. BELKHAYAT'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT SOVIET TONE NOT BELLIGERENT, THAT SOVIETS ALMOST SEEMED TO BE "GOING THROUGH AN ACT". HE SAID SOVIETS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT WISH TO SEE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF TENSION IN AREA.

5. SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL HAS TOLD US MUCH THE SAME THING. SOVIETS HAD "RATHER HEAVILY" STRESSED NEED FOR SAHARAN SELF-

DETERMINATION, REFERRING TO "SOME KIND OF REFERENDUM". MFA OFFICIAL CHARACTERIZED ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING TALKS AS POSITIVE AND SAID THAT SOVIETS HAD STRESSED HOPES FOR GOOD FUTURE RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO. ASKED WHETHER USSR HAD OFFERED BE HELPFUL IN ANY SORT OF MEDIATORY ROLE, FONOFF OFFICIAL EMPHATICALLY REPLIED IN NEGATIVE. OSMAN HAD STUCK WITH STANDARD GOM LINE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REFERENDUM AND THAT ALGERIANS SHOULD CALL OFF THEIR ATTACKS. FONOFF OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT GOM FELT SOVIETS WOULD PREFER GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SIDES BUT IN CRUNCH WOULD LINE UP WITH ALGERIA.

6. IN ASIDE SAME FONOFF OFFICIAL SAID SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY SHOWN CONCERN OVER LIBYAN ROLE IN SAHARA DISPUTE AND QADHAFI'S ABILITY TO FOMENT TROUBLE. MOROCCANS, HE SAID, CONVINCED THAT SOVIETS DO NOT WANT WAR IN NORTH AFRICA.

7. COMMENT: MOROCCO AND USSR THUS SEEM HAVE CLARIFIED THEIR TACIT AGREEMENT TO DISAGREE, WITH THE SOVIETS MAKING YET ANOTHER PITCH TO ASSURE GOM THAT KREMLIN NOT ENCOURAGING CONFLICT IN AREA. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT MOROCCANS TOOK INITIATIVE FOR THIS VISIT, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAT TO PROVOKE UNEASINESS IN ALGIERS. AS EMB MOSCOW HAS NOTED (MOSCOW 2744), SOVIETS FOUND OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE OSMAN IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO GO ALONG WITH VISIT DESPITE PRESS OF UPCOMING CPSU CONGRESS. WEST GERMAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE REPORT THEIR MOSCOW EMBASSY ALSO IMPRESSED BY THAT FACT. AT SAME TIME, AS TREND IN AREA CONTINUES TOWARD HARDENING OF POSITIONS AND INCREASED DISTANCE BETWEEN MOROCCANS AND ALGERIANS, MOROCCANS TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT SOVIETS, IF FORCED TO CHOOSE, WOULD LINE UP WITH ALGERIANS. SOVIETS FOR THEIR PART DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DISPEL SUCH AN ASSESSMENT.

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